

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, ETRD, EGEN, KS

SUBJECT: SIXTH INTERMINISTERIAL: AGENDA ITEM IV-A - KOREAN-
AMERICAN BUSINESS INSTITUTE

REF: SEOUL 3320

1. IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THIS SIXTH INTERMINISTERIAL AGENDA ITEM, EMBOFF THIS WEEK HAS DISCUSSED PROPOSED KOREAN-AMERICAN BUSINESS INSTITUTE (KABI) WITH GENERAL CHANG, WOO-JOO, PROSPECTIVE PRESIDENT OF EMERGING INSTITUTE, AND WITH OFFICERS OF THE KOREAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (KCCI) AND KOREA-U.S. ECONOMIC COUNCIL (KUSEC).

2. AT LUNCHEON MEETING WHICH INCLUDED H.K. KIM, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF KCCI, GENERAL CHANG EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FROM THE KOREA-U.S. ECONOMIC COUNCIL BECAUSE KUSEC ITSELF IS ALREADY RECEIVING HEAVY SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE KOREA TRADERS ASSOCIATION, THE FEDERATION OF KOREAN INDUSTRIES AND KCCI. WITH KCCI'S KIM NODDING ASSENT, THE GENERAL WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THERE WAS SOME CONCERN AMONG KUSEC SUPPORTERS AT THE SIZE AND EXPENSE OF KUSEC ORGANIZATION AS COMPARED WITH ITS KOREAN/JAPANESE COUNTERPART. THERE WAS ALSO SOME DOUBT BEING CASE ON THE ACTUAL RESULTS AS COMPARED WITH THE HEAVY OPERATING COSTS OF THE ORGANIZATION.

3. RATHER THAN RELYING ON KUSEC, GENERAL CHANG SAID HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN CLOSE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT OF THE KOREAN CHAMBER WHICH WOULD MATCH SUPPORT BEING OBTAINED FROM THE U.S. CHAMBER,
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H.K. KIM AFFIRMED THAT IN HIS POSITON AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF KCCI,

HE WOULD, ALONG WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER, ACCEPT THE POSITION OF NATURAL POST DIRECTOR OF KABI. KIM INDICATED THE POSSIBILITY OF KCCI FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR KABI, BUT WAS VAGUE AS TO AMOUNTS WHICH WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

4. EMBOFF STRESSED THAT CONTINUING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR KABI WOULD HAVE TO BE OBTAINED FROM USERS OF INSTITUTE'S SERVICES AND ASKED GENERAL CHANG ABOUT CURRENT STATUS OF SURVEY WHICH WAS TO BE CONDUCTED IN ORDER TO ELICIT FROM BOTH AMERICAN AND KOREAN BUSINESS COMMUNITIES AN INDICATION OF DEGREE TO WHICH THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN INSTITUTE PROGRAMS. THE GENERAL SAID HE WAS WAITING UNTIL INSTITUTE'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WAS COMPLETE.

5. IN SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW WITH KIM, TAE-DONG, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF KUSEC, EMBOFF ASKED FOR FRANK EXPRESSION OF KUSEC'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PROPOSED INSTITUTE. KIM PROCEEDED TO CRITICIZE GENERAL CHANG'S INSTITUTE ON SAME GROUNDS THAT GENERAL HAD USED TO CRITICIZE KIM'S COUNCIL. KIM SAID PLANS FOR KABI WERE TOO GRAND-OISE AND TOO EXPENSIVE. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER, GIVEN RECESSIVE CHARACTERISTICS IN BOTH KOREAN AND U.S. ECONOMIES, THIS WAS RIGHT TIME TO LAUNCH AN INSTITUTE OF NATURE INDICATED. AT SAME TIME, HE SAID KUSEC WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SOME SORT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR KABI IF KUSEC WERE ASKED FOR THIS KIND OF ASSISTANCE.

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